

WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER 2023, 7.30 PM
AT WEST MALLING VILLAGE HALL, NORMAN ROAD

Present: Mrs Trudy Dean (Chair)
Mrs Camilla Bridgeland
Ms Izzy Jones
Mr Keith Mann
Ms Sara Margetts
Mrs Lorna Miles
Ms Min Stacpoole
Mr Peter Stevens

Also present: PC Whitehead (until 8.01)
2 residents (until 8.01)

Minute		Action by	Action	Response
23/596	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Ms Gwyneth Barkham; Mrs Yvonne Smyth; Mr David Thompson and Borough Cllr. Tatton			
23/597	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - none			
23/598	MINUTES - the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2 nd October and the extraordinary meeting held on 9 th October were approved and signed.			
23/599	MATTERS ARISING			
	<p>23/545.1 – Postal Service – it was noted that West Malling and surrounding areas are still not receiving regular deliveries and that the parish office is now receiving complaints.</p> <p>Clerk to write to Royal Mail</p> <p>23/545.4 – Churchyard dip – it was confirmed that the dip had been reported to KCC PROW department.</p>	Clerk	√	
23/600	CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS - none			
23/601	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - none			
23/602	QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS - none			

23/603	<u>POLICING MATTERS</u>			
603.1	<p><u>Police Update</u></p> <p>Members of the Council welcomed PC Whitehead to the meeting.</p> <p>PC Whitehead reported that West Malling parish now has 2 part time officers, herself and PC Farmer.</p> <p>Ongoing issues with youth anti-social behaviour were discussed. There were 8 reports logged within the month of October; PC Whitehead outlined steps taken to try to identify the youths involved.</p> <p>PC Whitehead re-iterated the importance of reporting any incidents either via 101 (including online) or by dialling 999 in the case of an emergency. Incident reporting will build up a picture of the ongoing issues allowing the police to be able to dedicate more manpower.</p> <p>PC Whitehead updated members on the recent speed checks undertaken on both Swan Street and Town Hill by herself and colleagues. It was noted that 4 cars were pulled over and words of advice given to the drivers.</p>			
603.2	<u>Other Policing Matters</u> – the October police report had been previously circulated.			
	PC Whitehead and residents left the meeting at 8.01pm			
23/604	<u>LOCAL PLAN</u>			
	<p>It was noted that the joint parish Green Belt extension petition was presented to the Mayor, Cllr. James Lark on 19th October.</p> <p>Mrs Dean reported that the new call for sites had been shared with TMBC councillors.</p>			
23/605	<u>ROTARY HOUSE</u>			
	<p>It was agreed that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (purchase of land) it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.</p>			
	<p>Community Ownership Fund – it was noted that a full bid application was submitted on 11th October and that the Council is awaiting a decision.</p> <p>Asset of Community Value status – it was noted that no other community group had expressed an interest in the site during the initial 6 week period.</p> <p>Plunkett Foundation – information provided by the Foundation has identified a number of funding opportunities of varying values.</p> <p>Mrs Dean reported that she had had a meeting with a representative from Malling PCN who expressed an interest in using the site at a future date.</p> <p>There was a general discussion regarding the way forward should the council be in a position to enter into negotiations with the current owner.</p>			
23/606	<u>WEST MALLING PUBLIC CONVENIENCES</u>			
606.1	It was noted that Mrs Dean, Mr Mann and Clerk met with a TMBC officer on 30 th October to establish works to be undertaken by TMBC prior to transfer to WMPC. The Clerk has not yet received a list of works to be undertaken.			

606.2	<p>It was agreed that the toilets be surveyed by an independent surveyor and members were asked to consider the following quotes, Adkins Consultants Ltd £898.00 +VAT; Osborne White £750.00 & Nick Hill Consultancy £850 (no VAT).</p> <p>Members agreed to appoint Nick Hill Consultancy in the sum of £850.00</p>		
606.3	<p>It was agreed to ask SHS (cleaners) to provide a quote for additional staff on the day of the Christmas lights festival.</p>		
23/607	<p><u>REMEMBRANCE DAY / ARMISTICE DAY</u></p>		
	<p>Steward arrangements were discussed.</p>		
23/608	<p><u>AMENITIES RISK ASSESSMENTS</u></p>		
	<p>The draft risk assessments for the ball park, playing fields, children’s play area, allotments and litter picker duties were received and agreed.</p>		
23/609	<p><u>CLIMATE & ECOLOGY BILL</u></p>		
	<p>It was agreed that this should be considered further at Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group.</p> <p>Climate and Ecology Bill - Back the CE Bill Campaign (zerohour.uk)</p>		
23/610	<p><u>AUDIT 2022/23</u></p>		
610.1	<p>It was noted that the external auditor report and certificate had been received from Mazars for the year ended 31st March 2023. This was received on October 11th. The report stated:</p> <p><i>On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.</i></p> <p>The Clerk reported that a ‘Notice of conclusion of audit’ had been prepared and placed on both the noticeboard and the Parish Council website on October 11th.</p>		
610.2	<p>Minor Scope for Improvement – It was noted that 2 matters had been raised as needing further consideration as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 working day period for public inspection of accounts. Mazars reported that the public notice had not been issued as soon as possible after the accounts had been approved. The Clerk confirmed that there had been a gap of 25 days and it was agreed that the notice would be displayed as soon as the accounts are approved in future years. • War memorial / assets register – Mazars advised that this should not be listed at its estimated value but should be listed at £1.00 proxy cost. It was agreed that this would be amended moving forward. 		
23/611	<p><u>OFFICE MATTERS</u></p>		
	<p>The Clout office lease – amendments had not yet been finalised and therefore members were unable to consider the revised document.</p>		
23/612	<p><u>FINANCIAL MATTERS</u></p>		
612.1	<p>Accounts for payment - totalling £57,802.16 were approved - see attached.</p>		
612.2	<p>It was noted that payments in the sum of £9267.98 were authorised at the extraordinary meeting on 9th October</p>		

612.3	Financial Statement – bank reconciliation as at 31 st October was received – see attached.			
612.4	<p>Unity Trust Bank - It was agreed to proceed with setting up the online banking with Unity Trust Bank The following Councillors are to be signatories to the account: Mrs Dean Mr Mann Ms Margetts Mrs Miles Mr Thompson</p>			
23/613	MATTERS FOR REPORT			
613.1	<p>F&GP Committee - receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18th September - unavailable for the October Full Council meeting.</p> <p>There were no questions</p>			
613.2	<p>Planning Committee - receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 29th September - unavailable for the October Full Council meeting.</p> <p>There were no questions</p>			
613.3	<p>Amenities Committee – receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th October.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>			
613.4	<p>Highways Committee - receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 16th October.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>			
613.5	<p>Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group – Ms Stacpoole provided a verbal report of the Kent Wildlife Trust talk held on 26th October.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>			
613.6	<p>Broadwater Action Group – it was noted that the Berkeley Homes planning application has been withdrawn</p>			
613.7	<p>Malling Action Partnership – no report</p>			
613.8	<p>School Governors – no report</p>			
613.9	<p>Malling Society – it was noted that an Autumn newsletter had been circulated.</p>			
613.10	<p>Chamber of Commerce / Christmas Lights Committee – it was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 7th November at The Cow Shed, behind the Farmhouse. Mrs Dean hoped to be in attendance.</p> <p>Christmas window competition to be judged by Ms Barkham, Mrs Bridgeland and Ms Margetts on Friday 1st December.</p>			
613.11	<p>Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council:</p> <p>Parish Partnership Panel – change of date to 9th November noted</p>			
613.12	<p>KALC/NALC/ACRE/CPRE:</p> <p>KALC T&M meeting – draft minutes of the meeting held on 28th September were received. It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 14th December.</p>			

	KALC – to note that the KALC AGM is to take place on Saturday 18 th November at Ditton Community Centre.			
23/614	<p><u>MEETING DATES</u></p> <p>Amenities – Monday 13th November – West Malling Village Hall, 7.30pm F&GP – Monday 20th November at The Clout, 7.30 Planning – Tuesday 28th November – West Malling Village Hall, 7.30pm</p> <p>Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group – tbc Macey’s Meadow Advisory Group – Thursday 23rd November at the Clout</p>			
	Mrs Miles and Ms Jones left the meeting at 9.30pm			
	9.30pm - at this point in the meeting, Standing Orders were suspended to allow the meeting to continue past 9.30 (this being 2 hours after the meeting had begun).			
23/615	<p><u>REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLOR(S)</u></p> <p>Report from Borough Councillor Tatton:</p> <p>Just a short report to highlight that following a motion put forward at October’s Full Council by my Lib Dem colleague Garry Bridge, and seconded by me, Borough Cllrs voted unanimously to support the appointment of a Disability and Equalities Champion. Subsequent to the meeting it has been agreed that 2 Champions will be appointed to the role - myself and the Cabinet Member for Community Services.</p> <p>Through the Champions the aim is to raise the profile of those within our Borough who have disabilities and additional needs, or who are otherwise disadvantaged in some other way, and to actively engage with disability and welfare groups/charities and interested parties so that their voice is heard and taken into account in decision making. These are hard to reach groups and yet they have valuable experiences to share and it has been my view that the Borough Council should do something extra in terms of engagement.</p> <p>In addition, interested groups will be invited to give presentations and information sessions to Cllrs to aid understanding of the range of needs which, in turn, should equip Cllrs to make more informed and empathetic decisions as well as giving Cllrs a better insight into what provision exists within the Borough which they may, in turn, share with residents looking for support.</p> <p>This is a cause very close to my heart. I already work closely with disability groups as Chair of a local charity for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities, and know only too well from circumstances within my own family the challenges those with disabilities face and so I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to work alongside the Cabinet Member in this way. We are due to have an initial meeting this week to guide next steps</p>			
23/616	<p><u>REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR</u></p> <p>Cllr. Dean provided the following report:</p> <p><u>Forty Acres Site</u> Vistry have removed a large number of trees from the A20 frontage of the Forty Acres site. This is apparently as a result of KCC requiring extended sight lines for the access road onto A20.</p> <p>Whilst the EMLPC requested TPOs on some of these trees, the request was not processed by TMBC despite a policy to fast track urgent requests. Vistry have not waited for an amended Planning Consent to remove the trees before going ahead with the work. They advised residents that it was for the council to sort it out, not them.</p> <p>This is a very unsatisfactory result of conditions which are not shared with councillors members by either council, perhaps because they were placed after a successful appeal, perhaps because they constituted an amendment.</p>			

	<p>I am exploring access to new planting on the verge between residents houses and the A20, and further new planting on site which could be achieved from trees within the Kent tree Plan scheme. (see 2 below.)</p> <p><u>Kent Tree Plan</u> I applied for tree planting in five locations in and around Lunsford Lane, West Larkfield, to be funded by Kent Tree Plan. I am delighted to have received approval for four of them and a site meeting was held last week to finalise species and locations for planting within the site. The unusually mild weather means the young 'whips' cannot be lifted from the nursery, and planting work is therefore being delayed till after Christmas.</p> <p>The scheme is being extended to next year and probably beyond, so if further sites can be found in West and East Malling I am happy to propose them. The sites in Larkfield are Gighill Green, Marlowe Road Green, behind the Leisure Centre New Hythe Lane, and at the junction of Gighill and Lunsford Lane.</p> <p>An investigation is going on to see why the fifth site on Marlowe Road failed to be Accepted.</p> <p>Kent Tree Plan also has access to some new elm saplings being trialled for resistance to Dutch Elm disease. They are considering a joint project with East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council to plant in an area to the north of the Village Hall, New Hythe Lane, as part of the trial.</p> <p><u>Mobile Speed Indicator</u> A mobile speed indicator device will be placed in position in In East Malling and Larkfield parish in a few weeks' time. It will be rotated between three sites; near the two existing sites on Lunsford Lane and New Hythe Lane, plus a new site at the Village Hall on New Road East Malling. The device was meant to have been part of the scheme associated with speeding in New Hythe Lane following the fatality near the Bricklayers Arms However, no suitable site was apparently found in that area, resulting in the New Road location being chosen.</p> <p>Paul Bannister who is coordinating EML Speedwatch group, is organising the rotation of the equipment.</p>		
	<p>There being no other business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.36</p> <p>Signed..... Dated.....</p>		

West Malling Parish Council						
<u>Accounts for Payment 6th November 2023</u>						Cheques to be drawn
<u>Section 137</u>						
Mr David Cooper (cheque 2631) (reimbursement for WMPC Remembrance wreath)						£ 25.00
Maidstone Signs Limited (cheque 2632) (invoice 43545 - supply of overlay stickers for Remembrance signs)						£ 81.00
	VAT		67.50		13.50	
Specialist Hygiene Services Ltd (cheque 2633) (invoice 45411-King Street toilet cleaning costs for October)						£ 664.88
	VAT		554.07		110.81	
Kent County Council (Laser) (single cheque 2634) (Electricity supply period September at 5% VAT)						£ 16.68
	VAT		15.89		0.79	
Kent County Council (Laser) (Electricity supply period September at 20% VAT)						£ 568.92
	VAT		474.10		94.82	
Streetlights (single cheque 2635) (invoice 14042 payment 3 (of 4) 2023/24 streetlighting maint. contract) (maintenance £1218.73 + painting of columns £352)						£ 1,884.88
	VAT		1570.73		314.15	
(invoice 14048 repair column 92 Churchfields - replacement photocell)						£ 117.30
	VAT		97.75		19.55	
Malling Memorial Insititue (cheque 2636) (invoice 29/23 - room hire for 5/10/; 16/10/; & 26/10.)						£ 60.00
Sovereign Sports (single cheque 2637) (invoice 1172 - 20% on delivery of fencing)						£ 11,316.00
	VAT		9430.00		1886.00	
(invoice 1173 - 20% on completion of surface prep and installation of fencing)						£ 11,316.00
	VAT		9430.00		1886.00	
(invoice 1174 - 45% on completion of asphalt works)						£ 25,461.00
	VAT		21217.50		4243.50	
Mazars LLP (cheque 2638) (invoice 2257162 - external audit fee for year end 22/23.						£ 504.00
	VAT		420.00		84.00	
Safeplay Playground Services Ltd (single cheque 2639) (invoice 24998 - to carry out repairs & newewals to play equip)						£ 666.00
	VAT		555.00		111.00	
(invoice 24999 - annual inspection of play equipment 8/10/23)						£ 420.00
			350.00		70.00	
Min Stacpoole (cheque 2640) (reimbursement for hot water dispenser)						£ 64.99
C&A Landscapes Ltd (cheque 2641) (invoice CA37253 Churchyard grounds maintenance 11th October)						£ 846.00
	VAT		705.00		141.00	
November salaries						
Mrs Claire Christmas - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Clerk - net salary for November £2090.58 + reimbursement for fax £1.20, sundries £7.00; stationery £4.50; reimbursement for R H title plan £3.00) postage £2.75)						£2,109.03
Mrs Sarah Howard authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Ass. Clerk - net salary for November £466.32 + reimbursement for postage £6.25)						£472.57
Mr Nathan Howard authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Litter picking duties for November 8 hours @ £10.42 per hour)						£ 83.36
HMRC - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Deductions from salaries - November)						£932.58
Nest - authorisation to pay pension contributions by Direct Debit for November						
Employer's contributions						£ 82.27
Employee's contributions						£ 109.70
						£ 57,802.16

3 November 2023 (2023-2024)

West Malling Parish Council

Prepared by: SH

Date: 03/11/23

Name and Role (Ass Clerk)

Approved by: CC

Date: 03/11/23

Name and Role (RFO)

Bank Reconciliation at 31/10/2023

Cash in Hand 01/04/2023 155,389.12

ADD

Receipts 01/04/2023 - 31/10/2023 150,237.02

305,626.14

SUBTRACT

Payments 01/04/2023 - 31/10/2023 79,430.91

A Cash in Hand 31/10/2023 226,195.23
(per Cash Book)

Cash in hand per Bank Statements

Petty Cash 30/04/2023 0.00

Current Account 31/10/2023 155,074.70

Deposit Account 31/10/2023 72,444.53

227,519.23

Less unrepresented payments 1,324.00

226,195.23

Plus unrepresented receipts

B Adjusted Bank Balance 226,195.23

A = B Checks out OK

Unpresented Cheques:

2626 Kent Wildlife Trust £100.00 09/10/23
2629 C & A Landscaping £1224.00 09/10/23

Direct Debits:

DD BT £41.65 02/10/23
DD BT £41.65 31/10/23